



CALL FOR ACTION
THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE

CALL FOR ACTION 101

Call for Action is a national non-profit organization. Madison is one of twelve regional offices. We are proud to be sponsored by WISC-TV, Channel 3. We serve consumers living in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. Our mission is to provide consumers, and small businesses, with education on consumer issues as well as helping when they experience a consumer issue, they are unable to resolve on their own.

The services Call for Action provides are free and confidential. When you need us you can file a complaint online at channel3000.com in the Call for Action section or by calling (608) 270-2833 and leaving a message. You can also reach us by email at wisccfa@gmail.com, to help.

Our highly trained, and effective, team of 12 volunteer Consumer Advocates are passionate about helping you. Currently the WISC-TV station is going through a complete building remodel which will be ongoing until Spring 2027. Please be patient with us during this time, as we each work remotely from our homes. We expect it may take a couple of days before we are able to respond to you but be assured, we will connect to you as soon as possible. As always, we will work diligently with you to address your consumer issues.

2026 TOP 10 CASE CATEGORIES

- CONSUMER
- TELECOM
- LANDLORD/TENANT
- HOME IMPROVEMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INSURANCE
- HEALTH
- SMALL BUSINESS
- AUTOMOBILE REPAIR
- SCAMS & FRAUDS

CONSUMER CALENDAR

Here are consumer-related speaking events:

July 8 – Fitchburg Senior Center

July 23 – Vista West Community

CALL FOR ACTION NEWSLETTER

If you would like to have this monthly publication emailed to you, free of charge, let us know at wisccfa@gmail.com. The newsletter is blind copied to everyone, so your email address will not be seen by anyone. After reviewing the newsletter, you can OPT OUT anytime by sending an email request to the address above and your email address will be removed from the master distribution email listing.

CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER STORY

Call for Action has been working on a consumer case that we want to share with you. This has frustrated us as much as it has been frustrating the consumer.

This consumer was tired of cleaning their gutters and to eliminate that chore contracted a well-known national company, with a local office, to install screen covering to the gutters on their home. The company guarantees you will never have to clean your gutters again.

The installation occurred in early September 2025 and seemed to go well. A couple of weeks later there was significant rainfall. They experienced water entering their bedroom which caused significant damage, so much so that they were unable to use the master bedroom. Prior to the gutter cover installation, they never had an issue. They contacted the company that day and promptly supplied photos as asked. The company was unable to send a representative for a couple of weeks. During that time more rain came and the situation inside the house continued to deteriorate. The day for the representative to inspect came and went with no one from the company showing up or calling. Then came numerous calls by the consumer and finally the company sent someone to fix the problem a couple of days later. The repair person found numerous issues, clogged gutters, and more. They documented the damage, including pictures of the issues, and sent them to the company and repaired the issues. That was in October 2025. At that time the consumer turned to communicating with the company about being reimbursed to have the damage inside of the house repaired. This involved many call and text messages with most unanswered by the company. The consumer went back and forth with the company until January 2026 when they contacted Call for Action for assistance.

Call for Action looked closely at the company. We found that they are accredited by the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and have a high rating with them. We reached out repeatedly to the local and regional offices and found a similar lack of response from the company feeling like we were being stone walled. This continued for over three months. At that time CFA reached out to two corporate executives. There was no response at that time, but the consumer did get a call from the company saying they would send an independent insurance representative to access the damage. This was after the consumer had already had three previous assessments which they supplied to the company. Since that time CFA has had conversations at the corporate level resulting in promises to get the consumer taken care of that have been unfulfilled.

During this process Call for Action advised the consumer to file complaints with Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the BBB. Those complaints did not result in the consumer being paid to get the damage to their home remodeled. It has now been 9-months since the consumer's home was damaged and they have been unable to use their bedroom. At this point we have advised the consumer that they should take legal action. We feel legal action will result in a win for the consumer and hopefully force the company to pay the consumer as they should. However, this is going to take more time.

Our advice to everyone is to always check out any company before you sign a contract with them. Even large, well-established organizations should be thoroughly vetted before you sign. You want to check references, read the contract, ask for documents showing insurance and certifications, check to see if they use their own employees or contract work out. Get everything in writing! Check with DATCP and BBB for complaints that have been filed. Talk to people you know to find out if anyone has used them previously. Check public records to see if they have had lawsuits filed previously. Check social media to see if there have been pages created by consumers who have experience with the company.

CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER INFORMATION

Wisconsin Consumer News (DATCP) June 2026

The True Cost of Paying by Barcode



What would you do if a familiar company asked you to make a payment by scanning a barcode at a well-known, trustworthy retailer? Scammers have been asking consumers to do exactly that. They claim you have outstanding charges or bogus fees, send you a barcode through a text or email message, and tell you to scan it at a payment kiosk or checkout aisle to complete the transaction. Scammers frame this as an easy, convenient way to quickly pay a bill, but it's a lie. If you pay, you lose your money and the transactions cannot be reversed.

It is possible to legitimately use barcodes to load cash into digital wallets or cryptocurrency accounts like Cash App, PayPal, or eCash at retail checkouts. In other cases, the U.S. Postal Service may ask you to bring a barcode into a local post office to verify your identity, or a healthcare provider may send you a barcode to confirm an appointment at check-in. But these legitimate transactions are initiated by you, the consumer. When you receive a cold call or an unsolicited email from a 'business' telling you to pay with a barcode, that is a red flag of fraud.

Consumers and small business owners should both be aware that this payment method is fraudulent. Transactions like this transfer the money directly into an account controlled by the scammer. Remember, scammers are known to pretend they're from a government or law enforcement agency, a well-known business, or a utility company. They will try to scare you into acting quickly by using urgency and high-pressure tactics. But legitimate government entities and businesses will not ask you to pay them by scanning a barcode at a retail store, even if it's a well-known store you trust.

If you receive a suspicious phone call, text, or email telling you to pay immediately – hang up or ignore it. Find the real organization's verified contact information online or from a previous bill, then manually dial the correct phone number to call them back and confirm the message was real.

Upcoming Presentations

DATCP hosts informational presentations on many common consumer questions and issues. Want to learn more about identity theft, landlord-tenant law, common scams, and more? Find our full list of upcoming public presentations on the [DATCP website](#).

This summer, DATCP's Bureau of Consumer Protection will attend fairs, festivals, and other events throughout Wisconsin to share consumer tips, knowledge, and resources. We hope to see you there!

- **July 8-12:** The Northern Wisconsin State Fair in Chippewa Falls
- **August 3-12:** National Night Out events in Franklin, Verona, Waunakee, Middleton, Wauwatosa, Fond du Lac, Northshore (Milwaukee), Fitchburg
- **August 6-16:** The Wisconsin State Fair in West Allis

CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER INFORMATION

Impersonation SCAMS are on the rise with scammers stealing thousands from people. These happen to people of all ages, but the scammers often target older adults. The scams typically involve someone contacting you to alert you to an urgent issue and they persuade you to transfer your money to keep it safe. Your money is sent to the scammer, and you will not likely see it again.

The lies the scammer tells may include:

- Someone is using your account. Here the scammer may claim to be from your bank or a well-known company. And often they manipulate the name/phone number you see on your caller ID to reflect the name of the organization they say they are with.
- Someone claims to be a government official warning you that your social security number (or other information) has been compromised or is being used to commit a crime. Again, do not trust the information regarding the caller ID that you see on your phone.
- Someone manipulates your computer screen by showing a fake security alert that appears to be from Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, or any known company. If you click the link or call the number provided you hear that your accounts have been hacked.
- You hear the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is calling with a fake story that requires you to transfer money to a Bitcoin ATM or give it to a courier sent to your home.

The criminals who are doing these scams are very highly trained and extremely effective at immediately making you panic and they sound very trustful in their desire to help you out of a horrible situation. They are pure evil criminals. To avoid these scams, remember:

- Never transfer or send money to anyone, regardless of who they say they are, in response to an unexpected call, text, email, or pop-up message.
- If you get contacted unexpectedly stop and then contact the company directly by calling using a phone number you know is real. Do not trust any phone number they provide.
- Never answer your phone unless you are expecting a call. If the caller is legitimate and is trying to reach you, they will leave a message.
- Learn about how to block calls on your phone to stop many of these scammers before they reach you. Many phones also have an option where a call from an unknown number will not ring but will be sent directly to your voicemail. A scammer will simply disconnect.

